

Meet Duxbury

Sue Bradford
Executive Director, Duxbury Student Union

BY J.P. O'NEIL,
CLIPPER INTERN



**Sue Bradford has been the Executive Director
of the DSU since 2009.** Courtesy Photo

Sue Bradford, Executive Director of the Duxbury Student Union, looks forward to every day at DSU.

Bradford has watched her own kids, who currently attend Duxbury High School, grow up in the Duxbury Public School System and as part of DSU.

"The DSU offers a safe place to try new things and to not being afraid to fail," Bradford said. "It allows them to learn more about themselves."

The DSU was started in 2007 and seemed like a great fit for Bradford.

"I really enjoy working with youth," Bradford said. "I try to inspire them to think more about how they can advocate and mobilize to do amazing things in their world."

Bradford first joined the board at the DSU in 2008, and was promoted to Executive Director in 2009.

"My role has been more than what I originally expected. However, I love that on a daily basis I could be doing anything from fundraising to program support to financials to counseling with students, or hearing about a student's day," she said. "It's very clear we can impact students away from school or home life."

Under Bradford, the DSU has undergone a lot of change for the better.

"Initially we were just a drop-in program for middle and high school students. And we quickly realized in order to impact youth in a positive way, we needed to reach kids at a younger age," she said. "Middle schoolers have choices of what they want to make, we can help them navigate. But it's even better when you're able to proactively work on that at the Alden School level so when they get to middle school they can say 'I do have a voice and I can speak up.'" Bradford said implementing good skills into the young kids will only make them become better people in the future. With so much technology today, it's good for the students to learn how to interact face to face with each other outside of school. "This environment here is hanging onto old school values," Bradford said. "We want kids to have eye ball to eye ball relationships. We want them to challenge each other. We want them to know it's okay to disagree. It's okay to have your



The Duxbury Student Union is headquartered on Saint George Street by the Percy Walker Pool. Photo by Aaron Carr

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own opinion. It doesn't have to be yours, it's okay to disagree. These skills come from not using devices. We have to encourage kids that they will need to interact with each other face to face when they get older."

Bradford allows the kids to come up with their own event ideas for the Student Union.

This forces the kids to communicate and work with each other in fun and creative ways.

"The kids get to decide things like what type of events we should have, the snacks, what elements would make it really fun, how much should be charged, and how to set up the room and decorate," she said. "They learn a lot about event planning, philanthropic endeavors, and how to negotiate and treat each other with respect."

Bradford had never predicted that she would be in the role she has today. A native of Australia, Bradford attended Victoria Institute of Technology where she majored in accounting. Bradford then came to the U.S. in 1989 on an international management program with hired hotels.

"I was sponsored through Northeastern University for the year abroad program. I loved it here so much that I wanted to stay," she said. "But I had to go home to complete my two-year obligation back in Australia under my visa agreement and then returned after."

However, Bradford soon realized that doing accounting 60 hours a week was something she really hated.

“I made a shift in the early 2000s to go into non-profit, and found that I really enjoyed being in a mission driven environment as opposed to a corporate environment,” she said. “I first worked at Crossroads for kids before joining the Duxbury Student Union.”

The Duxbury Student Union is everything Bradford could have wanted. “It is a pleasure to help build well rounded and happy kids,” Bradford said. “We will continue teaching life skills through interactions, manner, courtesy as long as the Student Union stands.”

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